

Chicksands Wood Investigation

23rd February 2007

Introduction: When this investigation was first planned the intention was to investigate two different haunted locations with two different things having been seen. One was going to be the top of Hammer Hill 0.75 miles northwest along the A600 from Deadman's Hill where an horrific supernatural being had been seen. Unfortunately that section of the A600 was undergoing resurfacing and the lay-by where we would have parked was full of contractor's equipment. This coupled with the amount of traffic on the road led to the decision to abandon this part of the night and instead, if we had time, to add Great Lane at Clophill.

The main location of the night was to be Chicksands Wood which appears to have a very strong connection with the haunting on Great Lane. Chronologically the Great Lane haunting was reported first when, just before Christmas 1969, a newsagent and his wife were delivering papers to Northfields Farm and encountered the ghost. They saw a light approaching along the road from the direction of Haynes Church End which at first they thought was a cyclist but it turned out to be a hooded figure on horseback carrying an old fashioned lamp. What made them decide it was a ghost was when the figure passed straight through their car. They were not the only people to see the ghost as a previous resident at Northfield Cottage (at the end of the drive to Northfield Farm) had eventually moved out because of the ghost.

The sighting in Chicksands Wood occurred in 1971 when a motorist driving through the wood came upon an apparition on horseback that, once again, rode through his car. There is no road through Chicksands Wood but up the centre of the wood runs Long Drive which now consists of compacted stones but did it in 1971? The track way, and in fact a lot of the paths in the modern wood, are visible on a map drawn up in 1892 and the wood is virtually identical in size and shape as it was in 1892.

If the sightings were of the same ghost then it is likely that it was heading towards Chicksands Priory, which was founded in 1150 by the Gilbertine Order. If it was heading to Chicksands Priory and was seen in Chicksands Wood then it would have had to have been north of a drainage channel which runs through the wood dividing it into two, Chicksands Wood to the northeast and Pedley Wood to the southwest. Assuming the figure was following a reasonable straight line then it must have been seen near where the two woods join, an area now occupied by a monument to Henry Robert, who was lost at sea in the collision of the steamer Comtesse de Flandres with the steamer Princess Henriette in 1889. This monument is at the southeast end of Long Drive which is a straight line from the north end of the wood at Appley Corner. The drive to Pedley Farm follows Long Drive until about 0.25 miles from the monument when the drive spits off to the right to follow a straight line to the farm. It is along this last section of the drive that the ghost was most likely seen as this crosses a straight line from Northfield to Chicksands. In our investigation we walked the entire length of Long Drive and walked along the last section of the track to Pedley Farm so as to cover all of the areas where the ghost would have to cross the paths to get to Chicksands.

Introduction by Bill King

Main Report LPS were pleased to welcome two new members, Jes and Dave, to their first field Investigation. The focus of the evening was on the hauntings of Chicksands Wood. Members Andy, Bill, Leana, Steph, Elaine, Dave and Jes walked the main path in hope of experiencing some evidence of paranormal activity. Some members already knew the alleged phenomena that had occurred here in the past but others were unaware of the happenings.

As they walked along the main path, members formed a distance between each other after looking at one of the monuments placed along the path and having the traditional group picture taken. Andy, Jes and Dave walked up on ahead, Steph and Elaine followed next and Bill and Leana were some distance back. Steph and Elaine stopped to take pictures of a slightly open area with Steph a few meters down the path in front of Elaine. As Elaine had taken her picture of the area she heard a footstep behind her. Steph at this point was standing still and no other members were even close to where she was stood. Elaine relayed the sound to Steph and they walked further on down the path. A further distance on, Steph and Elaine met up with Bill and Leana who had passed them during the walk and were exploring a side path off the main path. Bill explained that after Steph and Elaine had walked off further they had also heard a footstep like someone moving on the path behind them in the same area Elaine had earlier heard a footstep. Intrigued, Elaine and Steph decided to go back and conduct a small vigil in the same area. Standing a little distance back from the area they stood for about 15 minutes. In this time Steph and Elaine experienced what can only be described as light patches on the ground that seemed to appear and disappear. Steph described these almost as a dull glow. Camera footage did not show anything significant, in fact did not show anything at all as the woods were too dark to pick anything up even in night vision. Elaine reported feeling a change in the atmosphere towards the end of the vigil.

Later down the path Andy, Jes and David were conducting a vigil. Dave heard a noise, which sounded like a metal jingle, which he later concluded, was the zip on his jacket.

The team then split up to cover two paths, which is the area where an apparition has been seen. Andy, Bill and Leana walked to the right and Steph, Elaine, Jes and Dave unfortunately got the left path, which was more of a bog than a path!

Teams walked to a monument that is placed where the two paths meet, which was erected in the memory of John Robert Osborn Esq. by his family and friends. Here another group picture was taken. At this point Steph could smell Lavender. A quick check of the surrounding area revealed no Lavender although it is not known if any grows within the woods. On checking at the end of the night, no members admitted to having a lavender smelling perfume on. She also had a strong smell of fresh coffee. There are some properties around the wood so there is a possibility that it came from one of them on the breeze. It should be noted that no one else smelt these fragrances or did so at any other time in the investigation.

The team then made their way back down the long path but did not pick up anything else.

Andy then recorded the night's conclusions on his camera. Although nothing was seen, everyone who attended agreed that it had been a thoroughly enjoyable evening.

Report by Stephanie Lawn



Some of the team in Chicksands Wood